

SENATE, No. 2293

[Senate, March 1, 2010 - New draft of Senate, No. 223 reported from the committee on Education.]



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR OF TWO THOUSAND AND NINE

AN ACT TO IMPROVE AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled,

And by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting at the end of section 38G the following 2 paragraphs:-

3 All teachers who apply for initial Massachusetts educator license on or after June 1, 2011 shall
4 receive training and preparation in the use of augmentative and alternative communication for students
5 who are nonverbal or who have limited speech as a requirement for such licensure. Such training and
6 preparation shall include coursework in augmentative and alternative communication and practical
7 experience in the classroom with children who use augmentative and alternative communication,

8 including but not limited to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy
9 and other disabilities that result in limited or no verbal abilities. The coursework and practical experience
10 must be included for all fields, grade levels and types of Massachusetts educator licensure; provided that a
11 teacher shall not be required to receive such coursework and practical experience if he is applying for a
12 second or any subsequent licenses, and further provided that practical experience for regular education
13 teachers who apply for licensure at the secondary level shall include experience in the classroom with
14 individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication, and if classroom settings are
15 unavailable practical experience may include other settings with individuals who use augmentative and
16 alternative communication. Teacher and specialist teacher licensure requirements, subject matter
17 knowledge requirements for teachers, professional standards for teachers, requirements for field-based
18 experiences and educator preparation program approval requirements shall specifically address
19 augmentative and alternative communication competencies to educate students with disabilities who are
20 nonverbal or have limited verbal abilities; provided that a teacher shall not be subject to such
21 requirements if they are applying for a second or subsequent licenses.

22 The term “alternative and augmentative communication” shall mean methods of communication
23 other than oral speech that enhance or replace conventional forms of expressive and receptive
24 communication to facilitate interaction by and with persons with disabilities who are nonverbal or have
25 limited speech, including, but not limited to: specialized gestures and signs; communication aids such as
26 charts, symbol systems and language boards; mouth sticks; facilitated communication; and electronic
27 communication devices such as switches, head pointers, eye tracking, dynamic displays, auditory
28 scanning and speech synthesizers.

29 **SECTION 2.** Said section 38Q of said chapter 71 is hereby amended by inserting after the word
30 “styles” in line 13 as so appearing the following : “, including those students who are non-verbal or who
31 have limited speech and rely on augmentative and alternative communication, as defined in section 38G”.